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EMPHASIS IN LATIN PROSE

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The variety of theories put forward to explain order and emphasis in the Latin sentence certainly warrants further attention to the subject. Almost all the possible views, it would seem, are to be found in our American grammars.

1. There is a normal, unemphatic, grammatical order. Emphasis is secured by departures from this. Any word except the subject is emphatic at the beginning, any except the verb at the end. (A. and G. grammar [edition of 1877], 343, 344; H. [complete], 665, 1, 2; Lane & Morgan, 1139, 1147; Kühner, Vol. II, p. 1072, etc.) This appears to be the traditional view.

2. The beginning and the end are both emphatic in all sentences. (Gildersleeve-Lodge, 672, 673.) In long sentences the means as well as the extremes are points of emphasis. But further (687): "We find the ascending structure, where the emphasis is continually ascending until it culminates at the end, more common."

3. Substantially the opposite of the view just quoted was presented first, apparently, in the 1877 edition of the Allen and Greenough grammar, and has been widely accepted. "In connected discourse, the word most prominent in the speaker's mind comes first; and so on in order of prominence" (new A. & G., 597). "The more important word is never placed last for emphasis" (597, *b*). So more explicitly still in the new Andrews and Stoddard (585): "the first word is more emphatic than the second, the second than the third, and so on."

It is the chief purpose of this paper to show that the Greenough theory is erroneous.

Let us consider first certain objections based upon general principles.

The theory that the first word is most emphatic, the second next in emphasis, and so on, involves the astonishing assumption

that emphasis was the sole consideration in determining Latin word-order. Mark the statement: "In any combination the first word is most emphatic," etc. Very well, then, the word that deserves most emphasis must be singled out and placed first, the word next in emphasis second, and so on, without regard to rhythm, connection, or perspicuity.

But we are perfectly certain that emphasis was not the sole consideration. We know, for Cicero and Quintilian both tell us so, that great attention was paid to a sort of prose rhythm (*Brutus*, 33). This is a quality difficult to analyze or define, but everywhere it is one of the elements that distinguish literary prose from common speech.¹ In his *Orator* (222) Cicero quotes from Crassus: "Missos faciant patronos: ipsi prodeant;" and comments thus: "nisi intervallo dixisset 'ipsi prodeant,' sensisset profecto se fudisse senarium (*omnino*) melius caderet 'prodeant ipsi.'" Without any hint that the emphasis might be misplaced, he would change the order for the sake of avoiding a poetic rhythm.

With equal positiveness we may set aside the notion of an all-the-way-down-hill or an all-the-way-up-hill emphasis. The emphatic words in a sentence are related to the other words very much as the accented syllable of a word is to the other syllables. Accent whether it consists of pitch, or stress, or both, as in English, is purely relative. We accent a syllable, not by giving it a predetermined and uniform amount of power, but by making it clearly different in utterance from the syllables before and after it; when two syllables of the same word are accented, there must be at least one unaccented syllable between. The attempt to accent the first syllable of a long word most strongly, the next slightly less, and so on to the end, would result, if successful, in no proper accent at all, but only in a downward slide, a ludicrous bit of vocal gymnastics.

In a similar way, emphasis is purely relative stress. An unemphatic word in the more earnest portion of an address may be uttered with much more power than the most emphatic word

¹ Cf. *Orator*, 195: "quia nec numerosa esse ut poema, neque extra numerum, ut sermo volgi, esse debet oratio."

in a quiet passage. But everywhere, if a particular word or phrase is to stand out prominently, the adjacent words must, so to speak, retire to the background. If two words in the same clause, expressing distinct ideas, are to be emphasized strongly, one or more unstressed words must be interposed, just as surely as two mountains necessitate a valley between. In applying this principle, it must be remembered that emphasis is for the sake of the idea, not of the word merely; and therefore, if two or more words combine to express one concept ("O you *hard hearts!* you *cruel men of Rome*"), emphasis will fall upon the group, not upon any one word to the exclusion of the others. Two independent and even contrasted concepts may indeed be juxtaposed; the "valley between" will then be narrowed to a rhetorical pause; but without any separation between the two stressed words all effectiveness would be lost.

The obvious and certain principles so far stated afford no aid in deciding between the opposite theories of diminuendo and crescendo emphasis. Another general consideration may be of service here, derived from the laws of argumentation.

The Romans were a nation of public speakers. The first prose writings deemed worthy of preservation were orations. When Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus were writing Roman history in Greek, Cato's speeches were already treasured, and Cicero himself thought it worth his while to seek out and read more than one hundred and fifty of them. It seems reasonable to infer that the long-continued effort to secure effectiveness in oratory must have been the paramount influence in determining the chief features of Latin prose style.

Now, it never can have been good argumentation to bring forward the strongest proof first and the weakest last, nor good elocution to deliver every sentence as an anti-climax. If, for example, the first word in any combination is most emphatic, the second less so, and the last least, then every sentence, when properly delivered, must have been a sort of vocal toboggan-slide. Who can doubt that such a delivery would have been insufferably monotonous, and that the orator, of all that use human

speech, would be least likely to adopt it, or to frame his sentences so as to require it?

The laws of thought are not of any one period or language, but are valid for all who think. In the light of these, we should certainly expect the emphasis in a Latin sentence in general to be forward-moving. A period is a brief discourse. Whether it be laudatory, argumentative, or descriptive, it would seem that matters preliminary, accessory, or relatively trivial ought to be disposed of first; and the main tribute, contention, or charm should be held in reserve to produce at the end as vivid and lasting an impression as possible.

We ought also, in many cases, to be able to reach a clear judgment as to what is essentially preliminary, or relatively trivial. Which is usually more important, the time or the event, the date of the historic fact or the fact itself? Which is naturally preliminary, the protasis or the apodosis? And which is usually the more *important* clause, the supposition or the conclusion affirmed—the clause that distinctly advances the thought, with which, moreover, the subsequent statements have a logical nexus?

Probably all would answer these queries in the same way. And that which we should expect theoretically in the placing of temporal and conditional clauses, that which is true in English, in German, in Greek, is obviously true also in Latin. Temporal and conditional clauses in the vast majority of instances precede the clauses which they modify.

Not infrequently, however, such clauses follow the main clause. In such cases those who hold this theory of toboggan-slide emphasis must insist that these clauses are less emphatic, less prominent in the writer's thought, than those which precede the main clause. Let us see.

The Latin has several modes of calling special attention to a conditional clause. *Si* may be accompanied by *praesertim*, *modo*, or *quidem*. With *quidem* the clause often rises practically to the level of positive statement, and *si quidem* is rendered "since," "inasmuch as" or the like. Now, all these emphasized conditions regularly follow the main clause. *Cato Maior*, 6 "Faciam vero, Laeli [not emphatic; quiet acquiescence merely],

praesertim si utrique vestrum, ut dicis, gratum futurum est." Cato's special point is to guard against boring either of his friends, "especially" the one who has not yet spoken.

But we are not concerned at this point to analyze particular examples. The argument is from averages. Conditions emphasized by *praesertim*, *modo*, and *quidem* certainly are more prominent in thought and deserve more emphasis than those with *si* alone. The fact that they regularly follow and that ordinary *si*-clauses usually precede is of itself a strong argument in favor of forward-moving emphasis.

In similar fashion the *cum*-clause is accentuated. Since all the uses of *cum* are developed from the temporal meaning, we may for the present purpose ignore their differences. As we have *praesertim si*, so more frequently we find *cum praesertim* and *praesertim cum*. Now, certainly *praesertim* was not used to weaken the expression. And here again, while *cum* alone in its ordinary temporal or causal meaning commonly precedes, *cum* with *praesertim* regularly follows.

The same is true of the *cum*-clause of characteristic (see Hale's *cum*-constructions *passim*), and of *cum* with the force of a restrictive relative, as in Cic., *Att.*, 12, 18, 1, "longum illud tempus cum non ero." Such *cum*-clauses are certainly more significant, more essential to the progress of the writer's thought, than pure temporal clauses.

Another important instance is the clause with *cum inversum*. Here the subordination is purely formal. The principal thought or act, an indispensable link in the chain of events, follows *cum*, while the grammatically independent clause which precedes serves merely as a note of time. The element of unexpectedness, which gives this arrangement its rhetorical effectiveness, is often heightened by *vix*, *vixdum*, *aegre*, *nondum*, etc., in the first clause, or by *repente*, *subito*, etc., in the *cum*-clause. Is it not quite impossible to maintain that in such sentences the more important thought precedes?

It may not be assuming too much to suggest, even at this point, that a careful analysis is likely to show that when an ordi-

nary *cum*-clause follows the clause upon which it depends, it is to accentuate and not to diminish its importance.

Clauses of purpose and result may next be considered. Let us first clear the ground by a bit of criticism.

Safe induction must take account of the facts. It is a little surprising, therefore, to find our grammarians undertaking to teach us the emphasis indicated by the position of *ut*-clauses, when obviously they have not taken the trouble to determine what that position really is.

"Clauses appear in the order of prominence," we are told; so, usually, cause before result, purpose, manner, and the like, before the act (A. and G., 601 *b*). Bennett says (351, 3): "Clauses of purpose . . . more commonly follow." Lane and Morgan (1164): "Clauses of purpose and result . . . sometimes precede for emphasis." These divergent assertions, and similar ones that might be quoted from other grammars, agree in this, that result clauses often precede the word or words expressing the cause. The facts are that purpose clauses more commonly follow, contrary to Allen and Greenough; while pure result clauses never precede, against all the grammars that I have consulted, except Madvig (476, *a*). But substantive clauses with *ut* and *ut non*, as well as with *ut* and *ne*, like all other substantive clauses, though less frequently, do sometimes precede the governing verb. In the *Manilian Law*, for example, which fills about twenty-five pages, we find 16 purpose clauses, 12 following, 2 only preceding, and 2 of the *ne plura dicam* order. These are always unemphatic, always (naturally) come early in the sentence, or at any rate before the thing that is said, but depend on some word understood. Of result clauses there are, in this same oration, 56, and *not one* precedes the word or words which express the cause.² In the second oration against Cataline, 8 clauses of pure purpose follow, none precedes, and there are 3 like *ne longum sit*. Of result clauses 23 follow, 5 being substantive clauses, and only 1, of course also a substantive clause, precedes. Such is the case generally in Latin prose.

² In XV. 1, *ut aut contemnanti*, etc., are counted as result clauses defining *tantis*, not after *commoveri*.

The statements of our American grammars upon this point, therefore, are seriously in error, and any inferences drawn from the supposition that result clauses often precede and that purpose clauses usually do are absolutely unfounded.

Now, one of two things is true beyond question: either the result was *always* less emphatic to the Latin mind than the cause, or the more important of two clauses frequently does come last. It may help toward a clear decision to note the vagueness that inheres in *ita* and all the other correlatives that so frequently prelude result clauses. To say *Siciliam iste ita vexavit* and stop is to say very little indeed. The curiosity of the hearers is roused—always an effective oratorical device; but the definite thing Cicero wanted to say, the climax, the sledgehammer stroke, follows in the result clause, *ut ea restitui in antiquum statum nullo modo possit*. *Is* is clearly the weakest of the demonstratives, and is precisely the one most frequently used to prepare for a clause of result. Cicero begins a sentence to Lucceius (*Fam.*, 5, 12, 6) with, *Neque enim tu is es*. Then follows a clause of characteristic containing twenty words, including five verbs. Can any soberly maintain that *neque* is the most emphatic word of the twenty-five, *enim* next “and so on”? or that the main clause is anything more than a peg on which to hang the really significant portion of the sentence?

Consider also the familiar and fairly frequent combination *tantum abest* followed by two result clauses, the first substantive, the second pure. Do not the very words affirm that the most prominent, significant, emphatic thought comes last? So far is it from being true that the more emphatic clause never comes last that in the *tantum abest* construction the last clause is explicitly declared to be the most important.

In harmony with the phenomena just considered, a general principle may be stated. Whether regarded from the view-point of the orator or the logician, the unreal, the general, the vague, the undefined deserve, and in clear thinking must receive, less emphasis than that which is real, particular, clear, and explicit. Accordingly, when an alleged reason is denied and the real one stated, the habitual order is *non quod (quia, quo, quin)*

sed, etc. So that which is not the purpose regularly precedes with *non ut*, and the actual purpose follows it. And in general, when a word or phrase is negated as not correct or not strong enough, the correct or more adequate expression follows. Thus in *Pro Archia*, 8: "Adest vir summa auctoritate et religione et fide, M. Lucullus, qui se non opinari sed scire, non audisse sed vidisse, non interfuisse sed egisse dicit."

Another device to set aside the inadequate is the parenthetical *non dico*. In the *Milo* (35) we read: "Quid? si haec non dico maiora fuerunt in Clodio quam in Milone, sed in illo maxima, nulla in hoc? Quid voltis amplius." Cicero distinctly indicates that the stronger follows: may we not take his word for it in a matter of Latin?

A single instance may be added of the general contrasted with the specific. Who would dream of emphasizing our Anglicized *et cetera*, or *und so weiter*? It is a striking fact that in careful Latin, words like *cetera*, gathering up vague items that are not to be further mentioned, are brought in *before* the particulars which are defined and emphasized. *Cato Maior*, 85: "Nam habit natura ut aliarum rerum, sic vivendi modum."

It may be well now to turn to a different sort of evidence. Possibly some may feel that another, arguing for the opposite view, might select other kinds of clauses and produce a very different impression.

We appeal, then, to the co-ordinating mechanism of the language. For the purposes of this discussion, all the co-ordinating conjunctions and conjunctive phrases may be grouped in certain classes. First, we have those that connect with level emphasis; those that, by themselves considered, assign prominence to neither member. Such are *et*, *que*, *aut*, *ve*, *vel* . . . *vel*, *tum* . . . *tum*, etc. Second, those that assign a distinct prominence to the second of the two words, phrases, or clauses thus co-ordinated. This class is relatively large. Which one of all that teach Latin ever failed to call attention to the ordinary force of *atque*? Is there any question that it commonly means "and particularly," "and what is more," or the like? This force is often intensified by *potius*, which by the way is also annexed to *aut* or

vel, thus enabling these colorless particles to add with emphasis. *Cum tum* also implies the greater prominence of the second member (recognized by Kühner, Vol. II, p. 895). This force is made clearer by the frequent addition after *tum* of *vero*, *etiam*, *maxime*, etc. The same sort of ascending emphasis is indicated by the exceedingly common conjunctive phrases with *modo* and *tantum*, such as *non modo (tantum, solum)*, followed by *sed, sed etiam, verum etiam; non modo non sed etiam*, and *non modo (non) ne quidem. Quin, quin etiam, immo, immo vero*, and numbers of less frequent combinations might be added. Kühner speaks of "Herabsteigerung" (Vol. II, p. 671, 11, 13) in some of these cases, though he is careful to affirm: "Die Aufsteigerung ist der gewöhnliche Fall." The foible of omniscience seems to have played him false just here, for the very example he cites to illustrate diminishing stress requires the opposite. It is this: C. Seit. 20, 45: "iecissem ipse me potius in profundum, ut ceteros conservarem, quam illos mei tam cupidos non modo ad certam mortem, sed in magnum vitae discrimen adducerem." He evidently had not observed that climax in a negative sentence, or one negative by implication, requires a series of words or phrases that diminish in vigor or extent of meaning, but are delivered with increasing stress. Thus Cicero (*Pro Sulla*, 18, 50) says: "Ego non modo tibi non irascor, sed ne reprehendo quidem factum tuum." *Reprehendo* is less vigorous by itself considered than *irascor*. But it would doubtless be ineffective, or worse, in any language for the speaker to say: "I not only do not censure what you have done, but I am not even angry at you."

It would be next in order to enumerate as the third class of co-ordinating words those that assign special prominence to the former of the two members connected. But the writer is happy to relieve the reader's patience. He can be as brief as the famous chronicler who wrote upon "Snakes in Ireland." There are no conjunctions or conjunctive phrases in the Latin language that, in and of themselves, assign greater prominence to the foregoing word, phrase, or clause as over against what follows.

The only word that might even appear to be an exception

to this statement is *quam* after a major comparative. Even here it is a fair question whether the standard of measurement is not quite as important as that which is compared with it. But a moment's reflection shows clearly that in *quam* itself there is no distinct implication. If "greater than" implies the superior prominence of the first member, "not greater than" implies a parity between the two, and "less than," or "not so much as" (*non tam . . . quam*) suggests again greater stress upon that which follows. The implications, therefore, are found in the words and phrases that accompany *quam*, and not in the conjunction itself. The mechanism of comparison became stereotyped, and except with the ablative of comparison, it is as uncommon to put the standard before the thing compared as to put a pure result clause before the clause or phrase containing the correlative of *ut*.

Now, if in any combination the first word is most emphatic, the second next in emphasis, and so on, and if clauses are arranged in the order of diminishing importance, how is it that the whole co-ordinating apparatus of the language indicates either level emphasis or greater emphasis upon that which follows?

But this is not all. When words are connected by conjunctions which connote no prominence for the second member, the stronger or more significant noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, the more important phrase or clause, regularly follows.³ This one fact, if it is a fact, is sufficient, one would think, to establish progressive emphasis as the general law.

Turning to Cicero at random, we happen upon the oration for the Manilian Law. In sections 4, 5, 6, are the following co-ordinate words and phrases: *grave et periculosum*; *vectigalibus ac sociis* (note *ac*, and the fact that allies carry more weight in the orator's reasoning than mere tributaries); *causam rei publicae periculaque*; *deposci atque expeti*; *sociis et civibus* (the views of citizens are more to be considered than those of the allies); *excitare atque inflammare*; *cum magna in omnibus rebus tum*

³ In a climax of negative expressions, as just indicated, the weaker word is more "significant."

summa in re militari (readers will note here *cum tum*, the general word *omnibus* followed by the particular *re militari*, and *magna* followed by *summa*) ; *sociorum atque amicorum* ; *magna et gravia* ; *certissima et maxima* (the certainty of small revenues would be a small matter) ; *et pacis ornamenta et subsidia belli* (he was addressing those who boasted themselves *nepotes Martis*) ; *et ipsorum et rei publicae causa*.

In all these groups we have forward-moving emphasis indicated by the connectives, or by the greater strength of the second member, or by both. One pair only remains *Mithridate et Tigrane*, in which historic order, habit, or euphony, apparently places the less important last. At most here is one instance out of thirteen in which the foregoing word or group appears to be more important.

Every Latinist has Cicero at his elbow. The proposition here laid down is neither profound nor abstruse. The evidence need not be sought in Sanskrit nor in comparative philology. If it is not Cicero's habit to arrange his co-ordinate words and groups in this way, the stronger after the weaker, the more significant and essential after that which is less so, the theory of progressive emphasis may be unfounded ; if such is his habit what becomes of the opposite theories ?

After holding and teaching for years the theory elaborated by Professor Greenough, the writer was forced by closer observation of the best usage to lay it aside. While collecting material for a paper on the subject, he consulted Quintilian's *Institutes* and read as follows :

Let us first, then, speak of order, regard to which is to be had in the use of words both separate and in conjunction. Words taken separately we call *ἀσύνθετα*. In respect to these, we must be cautious that they do not decrease in force, and that a weaker be not subjoined to a stronger, as *thief* to *temple-spoiler*, or *insolent fellow* to *robber* ; for the sense ought to increase and rise, as in the admirable words of Cicero (*Phil.*, ii, 25,) "*you with that throat, those sides, and that strength of your whole body fit for a gladiator*," etc., since the words are successively of larger meaning ; but if he had commenced with the whole frame, he could not have proceeded with good effect to the sides and throat. (Book ix, 4, 23.)

And he further insists (25) that the order of time should often

be disregarded, "because sometimes prior events are of greater importance and should therefore be placed after lighter matters."

But Cicero himself is the supreme authority. If he did not appreciate the relations of order and emphasis in Latin, no one ever will. The writer has studied the orator's masterpieces to small purpose, if the main contentions of this paper are not abundantly confirmed by Ciceronian usage. We should certainly expect him to follow his own theory and frame his sentences according to *Orator*, 200: "atque omnia illa et prima et media verba spectare debent ad ultimum."